

Free Christian Commonwealth

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How the Doctrinal Errors of 1861 have led to the overthrow of Liberty in the Church.

We have in our previous article pointed out the natural outgrowth of the errors of the Assembly of 1861, in the "bad pre-eminence" of the acts of 1865. We proceed now to trace out the connection in the further acts of 1865, and the still more unostentatious orders in execution of those acts of 1865. There were other deliverances made by the Assembly at Pittsburgh, which alone would entitle it to pre-eminence. Such was its untruthful declaration, in face of notorious facts and official testimony, as the premise of its action against Southern ministers and people, that the Southern Assembly was organized to perpetrate slavery. Such was its declaration as a ground of thanksgiving to God, equally in the face of terrible facts attested by thousands in the Border States and in Northern prisons—that in the war "the national honor, unimpaired by acts of barbarism and cruelty, had been vindicated. Such was its demand for repentance and confession of their sins from individuals who had taken the Southern side in the war, and its demand of a formal renunciation of errors from those who hold, with Patriarchs and Prophets, Christ and his Apostles, that slavery, except in the abuse of the relation, is not sinful. Such the unworthy and unmanly assault by insinuation, under cover of its solemn official narrative on the state of religion, on the Presbytery of St. Louis as having acted hypocritically in its testimony against military usurpation in the courts of the church.

These and numerous other instances which might be cited, show how abundant is the harvest from the tares sown in 1861, and how terribly the church that once begins the "sowing to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." The thoughtful Christian who carefully considers the full significance of these deliverances, and their necessary logical results, cannot avoid the conclusion that they seriously affect some of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel by obscuring the view of Jesus Christ as the king and sole lawgiver in his church, and in consequence tarnish the glory of His Prophetic office in setting up against the teaching of his infallible word the commandments of men, or, at least, by obscuring his word with the false glosses of men; and in consequence again hide from the view of the people his relation to them as Intercessor in his Priestly office, teaching them by his Spirit what to ask for, that their prayers may be answered.

They seriously affect the unity of the church, producing therein conflicts for the faith once delivered to the saints—alienation of feeling between those of the same household by introducing the strifes and passions of the political world within the enclosures of the covenant; all leading inevitably to schism in the church, and thereby the marring of her beauty, the impairing and obscuring of her testimony for the truth, and the enfeebling of her agencies for carrying on the Lord's work.

They directly tend to the subversion of the foundations of our ecclesiastical polity—that system whose distinctive feature, heretofore, has been the clear assertion of Christ's prerogative as lawgiver in Zion, and the rights of the people under the constitution and laws which Christ has ordained for their protection as well as for their government.

They directly conflict with the fundamental provisions of that specific constitution and form of government, which speaking in Christ's name, and guided by Christ's law, our fathers established for us.

It was fondly supposed by many of our brethren—"who hoped against hope"—that the errors of doctrine and ecclesiastical polity to which we have referred, would prove to have been the mere temporary mistakes of human infirmity into which our office-bearers and courts had been led during the excitements and passions incident to a civil war; and therefore that they would be corrected immediately on the return of peace. But not only, as we have shown, have these errors sprung from a deliberate purpose to "bring in another gospel which is not another" on the subject of the church's sphere; not only is there a natural and necessary logical relation between the errors first promulgated and their results, and a "marvellous method in the madness," of these men of excitement and passion; but instead of retracing the fatal steps taken in 1865 toward outrage and violence to the consciences of those who "run not with them to the same excess of riot" by forcing upon them the acceptance of these errors as a condition precedent to fellowship, the Assembly of 1866, has deliberately proceeded to execute sentence against those who refuse to accept them.

We will not insult the intelligence of our readers by entering into any argument and exposition to convince them

of the utter subversion of all the fundamental principles of Presbyterianism, the utter defiance of our constitutional rules, and the utter recklessness of the reputation of a Supreme Court of Christ involved in the recent exclusion of the Presbytery of Louisville from the house not only without trial, but without plausible pretext, and still worse, without even a hearing by reason of the previous question. Suffice it to say, it is an enormity of error in the practical application of bad principles worthy to follow as the sequence of such enormous errors of doctrine and principle as we have been reciting. The saddest fact of all indeed, is the very consistency of this reckless act of usurpation and tyranny which has been inculcated for five years past, and ordered to be made a part of the covenant of the church by the previous Assembly. But this act of usurpation and contempt for all the covenant engagements of our constitution, was but a fitting introduction to that series of high-handed and revolutionary acts which have made the Assembly of 1866 memorable as the ruin-working Assembly. These acts we shall next proceed to consider.

Curious Specimen of Pastoral Letter-Writing.

It was admitted, even by those who entertained the profoundest contempt for the man, that as Moderator of the Assembly—especially after his any thing but lion-like utterance in the opening speech, and his rather low trickery in packing committees—Dr. Stanton wore the lion's skin with very considerable tact and ingenuity; so much so that if he had presented himself in no other attitude than as Moderator, the show would have gone off with eclat; and in spite of an unnatural sound from within the skin, occasionally, the people would quietly have concluded that Dr. Stanton was a very passable lion.

But—as the sad experience of many in the menagerie business attests—it is impossible to keep up the display of artificial lion-hood very long without great danger of exposure. Either from the natural craving of the creature with in the royal skin for his accustomed coarse fodder, or from his ambition to immortalize himself by his skill in roaring, he seldom fails sooner or later to utter the fatal *bray*!

It was not in Dr. Stanton's nature to sit still and hear men spouting their villifications at the men of the Border and Southern States—and their friends, for two long weeks together, without an irrepressible longing to have a share in the delightful employment. So, as it would not do to risk losing the lion's skin out in the rhetorical wind-storm that was raging, a scheme was devised whereby he should give one "big roar" from under cover. It suddenly occurs to his friend, Dr. Thomas, of course to the surprise of the Moderator, that a committee, of which the Moderator shall be chairman, should write a Pastoral Letter; and by way of discipline to the new recruits, Drs. Gurley and Krebs, their names shall be associated with his, that they may divide the responsibility and share the strapping which Dr. Stanton's quizzical roarings never fail to bring down upon him! So Dr. Stanton thereupon wrote, or probably drew out of his pocket a pastoral letter; or, what is more probable still, got out and put a Pastoral-letterish head and tail to a speech that he had carried along with him to the Assembly, in case he should fail to be made Moderator.

We shall have occasion to refer to this remarkable utterance frequently hereafter. For though intrinsically of about the usual style and calibre of Dr. Stanton's productions, and therefore having, in itself, little claim to our attention, yet as the Assembly—and we are all subjects of the Assembly, Dr. Thomas says—has solemnly voted that this *bray* shall pass among all its subjects as a "legal tender" for a roar, we meekly accept it as such. While we have ventured timidly to hint that the Assembly cannot by mere edict, and without reference to the constitution, or to the voice of the people, transubstantiate bogus Elders into true Elders—still we are constrained to admit that nothing in the constitution prevents the Assembly from making of itself what Dr. Breckinridge said the former St. Louis Assembly made of itself; and therefore, by logical necessity, nothing forbids it to ordain that a *bray* shall be held to be a genuine roar, or at least an ecclesiastical "legal tender" for a roar.

At present we desire to fix attention upon a single paragraph of this very odd sort of Pastoral Letter to the Churches; a paragraph having special significance for ourselves. It is one of the reasons by way of apology for the order of 1865, excluding all who do not accept the new abolition evangel:

"It was well known that the leading men of the Presbyterian Church in the South still cherished the same views under which the people had been led into rebellion—that the system of Southern negro slavery was a 'divine institution' as truly as was the Mosaic system of servitude, and was an 'ordinance of God' in the 'same category with marriage and civil government.' Even as late as the year 1863 a person commissioned to this Assembly from the Presbytery of Louisville published a work, which has been extensively circulated and commended both North and South, designed to justify and shelter the system of Southern slavery, 'slave codes' and all under the Scriptural sanction of the Mosaic system of servitude."

"It was under these circumstances that 'the Assembly of 1865 took its action upon slavery.'—The main points of its action upon slavery—indeed the only points referring to those who may apply for reception into our church from the churches of the South—are, that such applicants shall renounce the errors which assert: 'that the system of negro slavery in the South is a divine institution,' that it is 'an ordinance of God' in the sense above stated, and that 'it is the peculiar mission of the Southern Church to coarsen the institution of slavery' as it was maintained in the South. That these doctrines are not only heresy, but blasphemy, is plainly seen from the Word of God."

We have frequently enough exposed the miserable falsehood insinuated here as to the Southern Churches: it was exposed in one of the protests on the minutes of 1865. We cite the paragraph merely to expose the untruths here stated concerning the commission-ers from the Presbytery of Louisville and his book on slavery. All we care to say at present is:

1. That he *did not publish the book*. It was published by a congregation of honest truth-seeking British abolitionists, who after hearing, wished to preserve and circulate the discourse.

2. It never was "extensively circulated North and South." Mr. Davidson procured for himself at Louisville, some 300 to 500 copies perhaps. It had no other circulation out of Canada that we are aware of.

3. It was not "designed to justify and shelter the system of Southern slavery"—but designed simply to expound the Mosaic law on that subject in the light of all other Scriptures, and that as one of a regular course of lectures on the Scriptures in their order.

4. Its line of argument was the exposition of Scripture precisely in the sense of the Assembly's deliverance of 1845. And in that line of argument to show that the Southern Churches made no interpretations to suit a special exigency, but accepted the interpretation generally given by the true learning of all Europe, and of all America also, outside of a handful of bogus expositors, as Barnes and others, who have attempted to tinker the word of God into readings to suit Boston.

5. That therefore no intelligent man, with any logic in his head, and "troubled with a conscience," can possibly accept the Jacobin evangel of the sin of slavery as it existed at the South—aside from the abuses of the system—and at the same time accept honestly and fully the inspiration of the Scriptures.

Such are the facts in the case; and we need not say the facts are very damaging to the trustworthiness of the statements of this Pastoral Letter.

We have space only to add here:—First. That if this terrible book had been circulated so extensively, and is so dangerous as to need a Pastoral from the Supreme Court, warning against it, then, it is strange that it should not have been refuted, and its wrong interpretations of God's word exposed by some of these learned doctors. We have never met with an attempt seriously to answer its arguments.

Second. It is rather odd that a General Assembly whose ecclesiastical nerves were so shattered at the "vituperations" and "slanders" of the "Declaration and Testimony," should be found using, in a solemn official utterance in the name of Christ to the Churches, such epithets as "heresy" and "blasphemy" with reference to the teachings of men in good standing as preachers in the Presbyterian Church. Or is it an exclusive privilege of the "majority of four to one," to vituperate and defame men?

The Re-union Prospects from a New School Stand-point.

The *New York Evangelist*, one of the ablest of the Presbyterian journals of either school, in an elaborate review of the New School Assembly at St. Louis, after a congratulatory account of the several proceedings had in both Assemblies touching re-union, closes with the following very significant paragraph:

"It need not be feared, in the present state of our churches, that either side will propose any vexatious or impracticable terms. We can only come together on the basis of our common standards. What the conditions were to be neither Assembly hinted at, but left all these questions to the two Committees. If they can agree we believe our churches will cordially respond to the call, that we are now far in advance of what it has been at any previous time; much farther even than very many dared to hope it would be. God's providence and Spirit have been at work. And the noble and unflinching attitude of the other Assembly to its late deliverances, and the decisive action it has taken with such a large majority, against its recalcitrant Kentucky members, will greatly help on this work."

We desire to call special attention—and especially the attention of our brethren of the "middle men" type in Kentucky to this last very significant hint, as the clue to all this hue and cry against the Declaration and Testimony men. It was more than hinted several months since by an indiscreet new convert to the re-union scheme—that there had all the while been "a marvellous method in the madness" of the men who were trying to make the gulf bridgeless between us and the Southern Churches. That this was considered but a means to the end of closing the gulf between us and the New School. Now it is intimated—and by one who no doubt is well posted as to the purposes of our Jacobins—that the strife gotten up about the Declaration and Testimony is a mere ruse, a piece of ecclesiastical strategy to cut off the men who will resist the linking

out the church of our father to the mongrel Presbyterianism known as New School.

We ask our "middle" brethren who have all the prudence, wisdom, and conservatism, how far they intend to allow themselves to be caught and how winked? And how far the people of Kentucky are likely to let them go before denouncing and casting them off as treacherous strategists playing into the hands of the enemy.

Rev. Mr. Ferguson's Expulsion. The Letter.

We felt some regret that a very strong and decided protest against the expulsion of Mr. Ferguson, embodying a statement of facts and of the views generally entertained of the facts by the large audience present in the Assembly representing the great public, was not spread upon the records of the Assembly. Such a protest, we are informed, was prepared, but unfortunately for Mr. Ferguson, no vote of the Assembly was taken on it. It is painful to say it, but many think and say that this Assembly has done more far more against the interest of true religion in this city since it convened last week, than the high horse races that have been in progress here for some time! What a curse Radicalism is!

But I weary you. So, for the present I too, sorry that the great State of Ohio has not disgraced the only two really unflatteringly radical, and disgustingly vulgar speeches in this Assembly so far.

For the benefit of any of our readers who, like ourselves, do not know Mr. Galloway, we add here a single sentence from a letter we have seen from one of his Ohio constituents—a plain working man—by way of introducing them to this hero of whose fame the Assembly of 1866 is so jealous:

"I see our Mr. Galloway makes himself very conspicuous at the Assembly. Those of us who have known him since he was a boy, attach no importance to him only as a fit man to defame an adversary. He is sometimes employed in a case in court through these counties; but he is never expected to be, or considered to be, competent to manage a case. He is employed, after the witnesses are examined, to defame the other side."

Even the correspondent of the *New York Evangelist*, in full sympathy with the radicals, says:—

Some very ridiculous things have been done, too. The Hon. Mr. Galloway made a speech which in violence and grossness of manner, lost whatever force his more serious parts might have had upon the Assembly.

Such is the man for the defence of whose fair name the Assembly of St. Louis took such extraordinary proceedings, at the expense of an honest, warm-hearted, genial pastor; at the expense of the vast discourtesy and wrong to a Presbytery, and in such utter contempt of the constitution.

But, in our judgment, the great Christian public now and hereafter will conclude that an Assembly which could defame the signers of the Declaration and Testimony as "slandrers," which could defame Dr. Boardman as guilty of disrespect, to avoid recording his protest; and which could defame our exposition of the Scriptures on the slavery question in the sense of the church universal, as "heresy and blasphemy," has not hurt Mr. Ferguson much by putting him in such company. All honorable christian men will regard with loathing and contempt the conduct of Dr. Krebs in volunteering his services as hangman to the ecclesiastical mob in order to shelter a vulgar harlequin by raising the hue and cry against an impulsive but earnest and honest christian gentleman.

Dr. Brookes and Dr. Humphrey—Kentucky Pseudo-Conservatism.

In his speech before the General Assembly—Dr. Brookes of St. Louis thus very effectually disposes of the cant that the Declaration and Testimony is the disturber of the Church:

Do you desire to know who dragged these questions from the dead past to agitate our people with needless contentions? Do you desire to learn who has thrown secession into our midst as the apple of discord? Do you desire to discover who has gone about to vitalize the mangled body of slavery and make it a source of endless dispute and division? Sir, I believe before God it was this General Assembly. (Suppressed applause.)

Boldly do I affirm that it was not the Declaration and Testimony party, it was not the Louisville Presbytery which began this unchristian strife, but it was the fell and fanatical spirit that would not be content to let the dead past bury its dead, but insisted on making the dead past the test of our present standing in the Church and the controller of our future destiny. We have acted entirely on the defensive, and have only striven to bring back our beloved Church to her forsaken standards and to equip her for her glorious mission of saving souls.

Proceeding then to review the several views taken of that paper and to answer the question—was there sufficient ground for the protest of Louisville Presbytery—Dr. Brookes makes the following points:

First we had the fierce onset of the gentleman from Ohio (Dr. Thomas), who hurled his glowing imagery from the most terrific judgments, but it was the fell and fanatical spirit that would not be content to let the dead past bury its dead, but insisted on making the dead past the test of our present standing in the Church and the controller of our future destiny. We have acted entirely on the defensive, and have only striven to bring back our beloved Church to her forsaken standards and to equip her for her glorious mission of saving souls.

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ern papers, taken from the Ohio Statesman, extracted from the correspondence of that paper, written by a member of this General Assembly, in which the same—

Mr. Ferguson. I never wrote a letter to the Ohio Statesman before. This is the first communication I ever sent for publication.

Dr. Brown. Are you not the author of that letter describing the manner in which the Moderator was elected?

Mr. Ferguson. No, sir.

Dr. Brown. It has been attributed to you.

Mr. Ferguson. No, sir; I am a new correspondent of that paper.

Dr. Krebs. We have all heard Mr. Ferguson, and I am willing, I repeat, to hear him in full, in way of explanation, apology or retraction—the last being an indispensable requisite. I think this Assembly needs no words from me, or anybody else, to be thoroughly convinced that this is one of the grossest outrages ever offered to a deliberative body. It is a gross insult to this Assembly, and to the whole Presbyterian Church. I am Mr. Ferguson's friend. He has been my guest, and a very pleasant and acceptable one—but I know no man, sir, if it be in order, and if not in order now, I shall move it hereafter, that there be a record to this effect—

Rev. Mr. Herron. Is there not now a motion pending before this body?

The Moderator. Yes, sir.

Mr. Herron. Then is it right that we should entertain another motion on the top of that?

The Moderator. I understand the gentleman is reading this for information, as a part of his speech.

Dr. Krebs. My motion is that the record shall state what has occurred as follows, and I offer it as a substitute for Mr. McKnight's motion.

[The paper will be found elsewhere, as subsequently offered by Dr. Krebs, in a more complete form.]

Rev. Dr. West. I arise to ask the house to permit me to read the communication of Rev. Mr. Ferguson to this Assembly and what he says was the object for which he came to this body. It is a public document with some notes and declarations of Mr. Ferguson attached. It is addressed to the chairman of the Committee on Hospitality and Entertainment.

Dr. West then read as follows:

Washington, Oct. 2, 1866.

Dear Sir: I think I know you personally. Did you not once publish the St. Louis Presbyterian?

If so, I saw you when you came to New Orleans some years ago. I also wrote you some articles for your paper against ultraism. Politically, I am the same yet, and am sent by my Presbytery to oppose the radical measures that may come up at our meeting in your city.

Please let my dear Dr. Brooks see this, and to you and him I would say that my wife is to be with me at the Assembly, and I ask a special favor to furnish her as well as myself a good place to stay. I am to report to two or three papers (Ohio Statesman, Cincinnati Enquirer and Presbyterian of Philadelphia, and any favors shown me or wife shall be thankfully recorded and published to the honor of your city. Please number upon the receipt of this. Address me at Washington, Georgetown county, Ohio.

W. M. Ferguson.

[The reporter obtained of Dr. West the above paper and found it to be no public document. It was not the communication of Mr. Ferguson, but a private letter addressed to David Keith, St. Louis Mo.]

Rev. Dr. Schenk. I desire to make an explanation. I wish to say in behalf of the editors of the Philadelphia Presbyterian, that I understood from them, before I left there, that Mr. Ferguson was not employed to report for that paper.

Mr. McKnight raised a point of order that this was all extraneous to the question pending.

The Moderator said that he considered the paper was a part of the speech of Dr. West, and it was common for persons to read documents as parts of their speeches on questions pending.

Mr. Day said he had no sympathy with the political feelings or status of Mr. Ferguson, but he sympathized with him in the position in which he was placed. He believed that in a moment of excitement he had committed an act which he would always regret. He was sorry for him that he had committed such a grave act, and he did not stand here to ask that the offense should be passed over. The dignity of the house required that it should vindicate its honor, but he asked the house that their judgment might be tempered with mercy, otherwise this gentleman would go out with a fraud upon him which could never be wiped away—with the mark of Cain, which he would carry to his grave. He was required to retract in a moment of great excitement, and he believed he would make a proper retraction, one that would give satisfaction, if they would give him opportunity.

Mr. Ferguson. If you will allow me to say so, I will take it all back.

Mr. Day said he was glad to see the gentleman was ready to apologize and retract. It was the exercise of a Christian spirit that was commendable. He besought the whole Assembly now to receive the brother back again. He believed he would make an ample apology, one that would be satisfactory not only to the Assembly but to Mr. Galloway. He would ask Brother Ferguson if he was not ready to make a full retraction.

Rev. Mr. Ferguson. I confess I am sorry that under the spur of the moment I wrote so hastily those things I heard from other brethren, and I am willing to meet with Mr. Galloway and other brethren and make such explanation as will be satisfactory to them.

Mr. Day. I move that he be allowed this afternoon to make such retraction as will be satisfactory to this Assembly, in writing. I think it is no more than right that he should do so, and give it to Bro. Galloway. It is noble for a man when he has done wrong to confess it.

Mr. Ferguson. What do you want confessed? I confess I am sorry I wrote it, and when I wrote it I had no intention of injuring the dignity of this body. I thought what I said about Mr. Galloway was severe, but just about the people told me, and what they felt on the subject. In regard to any misstatements in it made dogmatically, whether stated by way of hypothesis or otherwise, that was a misunderstanding on

my part. You remember what he said—that he would not commune with Bro. Boardman till he washed his hands of that.

A Member. Is the brother willing that it shall be published, that he here retracts and apologizes to this house for the insult which he has given it?

Mr. Ferguson. I am willing it shall go to the world in this light; that I am sorry I ever wrote these things on this subject, but so far as there is anything there that is a misstatement, it was altogether from a misunderstanding of the brother's hypothesis. If you will look at the brother's speech, it is there hypothetically.

A Member. Will he acknowledge the charge is not true?

Mr. Ferguson. I acknowledge, as far as my presentation of it goes, it is incorrect; but so far as the hypothesis is concerned, it is correct. Bro. Galloway said, if Bro. Boardman did not do so and so. That was what called my attention to it, and after the letter had gone, I asked about that. "Did you hear Bro. Galloway say so and so," and the reply was, hypothetically, he said so. I was shocked when I understood him at the time. He told us to go away and hang ourselves, like Judas. It filled me with the electricity which the brother spoke of, and afterwards a brother came to me and asked me if Bro. Galloway was admitted to intemperance.

I answered, "No, sir; he is a strong temperance man." The brother said he thought he had a "Highland gill" in his cheek. I said I disapproved of all these statements, and that he was a strong temperance man. If I had erred against the brother, I take the error all back.

Mr. Galloway interrupted by saying this charge was false and scandalous.

Mr. Ferguson. What charge?

Mr. Galloway. That I was vulgar.

Mr. Ferguson. I said he acted vulgarly here.

Mr. Galloway. No man has ever charged me with being intemperate or vulgar.

Mr. Ferguson. I have not done it.

Mr. Galloway. I want no recantation except that this charge is false and scandalous; that its publication shall be in the same paper as that in which the charges were made—that it may go before my family and friends as this libel has gone. Sir, I will not sit in the same Assembly with a man who characterizes me as a buffoon and a blackguard.

Rev. S. G. Law did not think there was any necessity for precipitate haste in settling this matter, and he desired to offer an amendment that Drs. Krebs and Humphrey be appointed a committee to confer with these two gentlemen and propose terms of agreement. [No, no, no, by members.]

The Moderator said the amendment was not in order.

Mr. Wilson said that nothing would be lost by taking time to consider this matter. He moved, therefore, that it be postponed until this afternoon with a view of affording Mr. Ferguson an opportunity to present his statement in writing.

Dr. West moved to lay the motion on the table, which was agreed to.

Rev. Mr. Herron thought the longer action postponed the more likely they would be to act with deliberation and calmness. This brother was evidently of an excitable temperament, and the kind of labor he had performed before he entered the ministry had developed this excitability. He sympathized with him, the more so since he had been informed that by his own unaided efforts he secured an education which enabled him to enter the ministry. He had been the correspondent of a number of papers, and sometimes he had allowed his pen a good deal of liberty. Heretofore he had been arraigned only at the bar of public opinion, as to the correctness of his reports, but to-day he occupied a different position. He was evidently laboring under intense excitement, and this Assembly was not wholly free from it. The house indeed is in commotion. He supposed that since the Presbyterian Church was founded, no such action had been taken as was here proposed. He hoped, therefore, they would not act rashly or harshly, and thus stand before the world in a false attitude. He had understood the gentleman had retracted.

Mr. Ferguson. I repeat it, so far as I infringed on Mr. Galloway. So far as my intention appears to misrepresent that brother, I am exceedingly sorry my pen run in that dogmatic way, for the whole thing is hypothetical, as you see.

Dr. McLean. Do you admit that it is false and slanderous?

Mr. Ferguson. As reported there, but it was not my intention.

Dr. McLean. Did you write it at that table?

Mr. Ferguson. No, Sir. It was written after I went home. Then I was asked whether Mr. Galloway had been drinking. I said no, he was a strong temperance man.

Dr. McLean. After you went home did you believe Mr. Galloway a fool?

Mr. Fisher. I rise to a point of order. Mr. Herron has the floor.

The Moderator. I understand that gentleman gave way.

Mr. Herron continued by saying that he had no sympathy with Mr. Ferguson's political views, but thought in a case of so much importance they should not act hastily.

Rev. Mr. Shiland suggested that Dr. Krebs, Mr. Galloway and Mr. Ferguson be allowed to retire, to permit Mr. Ferguson to write such an apology as would be satisfactory to Mr. Galloway.

The suggestion was not entertained.

Dr. Boardman. Had not seen the paper referred to in the remarks of the members, had not heard it read, and did not wish to hear it read, and was willing to take the representations made of it by the members he had heard speak.

Called upon the Assembly to remember the Master's teachings, and take heed to itself, as well as to Mr. Ferguson. Quoted the passage, "If thy brother trespass against thee," &c. Every one had need of forgiveness. Called to mind the action of Christ when denied by Peter with cursing. He turned and looked on Peter, and he went out weeping bitterly. [A voice—Where are Mr. Ferguson's tears? Does the Bible teach

that we are to forgive without repentance?] Would the Assembly refuse this offering brother opportunity to go out? Would it pass this tremendous judgment upon him in the excitement of this hour? Would it exhort him that he should upon the instant exhibit all the fruits of repentance? All he asked of the Assembly was delay. That the members would do as they would be done by. He moved that the whole matter be referred to a committee.

The reading of the resolutions, with the amendments, was called for, and they were read.

Rev. Mr. Frazer asked of Mr. Ferguson if the communication was written immediately after a certain conversation with a gentleman by the name of Allen.

Mr. Ferguson couldn't state whether it was or not.

Mr. Frazer then went on to say that if it was, he could state from his personal knowledge that at that time Mr. Ferguson was laboring under intense excitement, to that degree that if ever a man of sane mind was not accountable for what he said or did, Mr. F. could not have been then. That he told Mr. Ferguson if he didn't quit talking in the manner in which he was then talking he would utterly ruin himself, and that people would think he was crazy. That he utterly condemned the article altogether, but didn't know that he himself was in some degree accountable for the result which followed, by adding, by his remarks to Mr. Ferguson, somewhat to the provocation, but at the same time he did not regard Mr. Ferguson's explanation as satisfactory.

Dr. Lowrie thought the house was nearly ready to come to a vote on the question, and wished to make a single suggestion. The offense was a grave one. The offensive article had been written and printed and sent broadcast through the country, and any explanation or retraction should come before the Assembly in somewhat the same form—not printed, perhaps, but written. Thought it would be wise to suspend action until Mr. Ferguson could write down his explanation of the subject, and would say he thought, in coming to a judgment, the Assembly was bound to take into account the characteristics of the brother.

Dr. McLean. There had been a great deal of advice to this house to be calm, from a certain quarter, as if the excitement were all on one side. Dr. Boardman had read the Assembly a very pious lecture; but not one word was said to the offenders. Great forbearance must be exercised by the house, but there was no excitement to be allayed on the other side; they were all calm and undisturbed like Dr. Boardman and men on the other side. He asked what sign of repentance had been seen on the part of the offending brethren. He characterized the letter as the most monstrous libel on this or any other deliberative body that had ever been issued. Since 1788 there never had been such an outrage perpetrated on the Assembly.

Dr. Monfort rose to a point of order, that Dr. McLean was not speaking to the question, which was upon the motion to refer to a committee.

Dr. McLean being allowed to proceed, said that perhaps the Assembly had not fully appreciated the article in question; he would read it again; and commenced reading the article.

Mr. Day objected to the paper being read again.

Dr. McLean insisted upon his right to read the article as a part of his speech, and proceeded to do so, commencing as he went along upon grossness of the libel, and the great indecency of the expression.

As Dr. McLean proceeded, at the end of almost every period, he cried shame! shame on such a man.

Dr. McLean spoke of the wide spread injury done by this article, both to the Assembly and to Mr. Galloway, whose reputation was injured by such publications, as it would go in the prints, where no retraction or explanation would follow it. Commented upon the insufficiency of the explanation of Mr. Ferguson, who had only said in substance that he wouldn't do it again in that way, but hadn't said he wouldn't do it again in some other way. Meantime that the resolution offered by Dr. Krebs spoke the truth and ought to be adopted.

Rev. Mr. Reinbolt moved to lay all the motions before the house, excepting Dr. Krebs, on the table. Carried.

Dr. Krebs again read his resolutions with some emendations rendered necessary by the further action of the Assembly as follows:

Resolved, That whereas the Rev. W. M. Ferguson, a commissioner to this General Assembly, by his own acknowledgment, guilty of writing and publishing in the Ohio Statesman, a gross, abusive, scandalous and slanderous libel against members of this Assembly, and against this Assembly itself, and although he has qualified it in the presence of this Assembly this morning, his explanation is not deemed satisfactory.

Resolved, That the Rev. W. M. Ferguson be forthwith expelled as a member of this house.

A motion for the previous question was carried.

Dr. Krebs' resolution then prevailed, with a very light vote in the negative.

Moderator. I NOW ANNOUNCE AGAIN, THAT REV. W. M. FERGUSON IS EXPELLED FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

I wish to state, if I am not correct, I wish to be informed of it, that this necessarily involves his being expelled from the table as a correspondent.

As Mr. Ferguson withdrew from the house, the members of the Assembly applauded.

Rev. A. Shiland offered the following:

Resolved, That debate on all propositions now before the Assembly, or that may come before it on the subject matter of the Louisville Presbytery, or on the Declaration and Testimony, be closed at five o'clock this day, and that a vote be then taken without further delay.

And moved the previous question.

Dr. Breckinridge moved that the motion for the previous question be laid on the table. Carried.

A motion then prevailed to lay Mr. Shiland's motion on the table.

The Moderator then announced that Rev. E. D. McMaster, D. D., had been elected to the Chair of Theology in the Theological Seminary of the North-west.

The Assembly then voted to take up

the unfinished business of the last session, being Dr. Gurley's substitute for the report of the committee in regard to the Louisville Presbytery.

The Moderator announced that Dr. West was entitled the floor.

Dr. West commented upon the great interest which the public felt in the discussions upon this question. Almost every whisper in the house was reported not only in the religious, but in the secular papers; referred to those in the galleries who honored the Assembly with their presence, and dishonored it during a portion of the sessions with their disorders; affirmed that the unpleasant business by which the Assembly had been delayed at this session (that gross insult to the Assembly) was but a palpable expression of what had been witnessed in the galleries; was sure that no lady and no gentleman, especially no Christian man or woman, [A voice—Aro these remarks to the question?] who remembered the fact that they stood before the altar of the Presbyterian Church, would for one moment think of trespassing on the propriety and sanctity of this court.

He characterized the movement of the "Declaration and Testimony" men as the continuation in the Church of God by ministers, elders, and the people of the gigantic rebellion which had enveloped the whole land in mourning, lamentation and woe, and affirmed that the aiders and abettors, defenders and apologists of these men are the aiders, abettors, apologists and defenders of that gigantic rebellion through which the Church of God was now passing.

Wished it understood that the speech of his colleague (Dr. Van Dyke) did not represent the principles of any considerable part of the Presbytery of Nashville. Read from a pamphlet entitled "Politics for Christians, by Rev. H. J. Van Dyke," being a sermon preached on Thanksgiving day, 1856, about two weeks after the election of Hon. James Buchanan to the Presidency. What was then Dr. Van Dyke's opinion of the indications of discontent in Massachusetts and other parts of New England, and asked why the same opinion was not applicable to like discontent in the South after the election of Mr. Lincoln.

He read from a published letter written by Mr. Van Dyke to some one in Georgia, before the secession of South Carolina, and before the Synod of South Carolina had taken its action, clearly counseling rebellion as a religious duty.

Dr. Van Dyke. Will you go on and read the conclusion of that letter?

Dr. West. No, sir, I won't. Every sentence is conclusive.

Dr. Van Dyke. I thought you would not read it all.

After reading further extracts from the letter, and commenting upon Dr. Van Dyke's political and Church relations, he said:

"He and I personally have no difficulties, but we understand each other most exactly and distinctly on this question." Stated Dr. Van Dyke's arguments to be, that unless the injunctions and orders of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church were obligatory on the inferior courts the Louisville Presbytery was not in rebellion, and the action of the General Assembly against the Louisville Presbytery could not be sustained.

The speaker admitted, and proposed, whole question was right there, and proceeded to show that the General Assembly had not in 1861 or 1865 decided any political question, but had affirmed a point long before decided; that the action of the Assembly did not infringe unwarrantably upon the behests of conscience; that it had not undertaken to interpret the will of Providence without quoting a text; explained from the report of the Assembly its action with regard to the alleged difference of treatment of Northern and Southern people; claimed that the actions of the General Assembly were binding, as those of an ultimate final tribunal; that the doctrines in support of them were laid down in the confession of faith; held that all the questions raised in this matter had been decided adversely to the "Declaration and Testimony" men in the conflict from 1830 to 1833, between the new measure men and the Assembly, which resulted in the division into Old and New School; that it was then decided that there was no appeal from the decision of the General Assembly; that men must either conform to these decisions or go elsewhere, applied at length to the position taken that the acts of the General Assembly must be submitted to the Presbytery for their approval before they can become the law of the Church; and asked if any one supposed that the Declaration and Testimony would have been any the more ready to submit if that had been the course taken, and closed by asking the substitute offered by Dr. Gurley, and expressing his belief that the Church of God had done her duty, and never should have had civil war, and that if she did her duty now it would be the killing of this hydra of rebellion.

Mr. Cunningham obtained the floor, but gave way to Dr. Boardman, who, in turn, allowed Dr. Van Dyke to say that those portions of his letter as read by Dr. West, separately from the context, even if not so intended to do, gave an impression in regard to his views utterly unjust, false and injurious.

Dr. Yantis. I wish to know if it is not intended to let any of us terrible "Declaration and Testimony" men speak at all.

Moderator. Those who desire to speak must obtain the floor.

Dr. Yantis. We are in no hurry, but we desire to be heard.

Dr. Boardman, after offering to yield the floor to any of the Declaration and Testimony men who desired to speak, which offer no one accepted, proceeded to state that if the Presbytery concerned in this discussion had been that of the Passaic or of St. Lawrence, it never would have come before the Assembly in the aspect in which it is now; that the individual quarrels in Kentucky and Missouri, in which States the war had been one of neighborhoods, had been brought into the Assembly; was gratified that the appealed case had collapsed; reviewed in what seemed to be intended as a facetious vein, the reference of Dr. Thomas to the Assembly at

Jerusalem, asking if St. Paul called together a caucus of ministers and elders, the evening before the synod met.

At which point the Assembly adjourned until afternoon.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

Dr. Hand moved that the debate on the report in regard to the Louisville Presbytery should close at six o'clock, that after Dr. Boardman concluded, all speakers should be limited to fifteen minutes, save those who signed the Declaration and Testimony, who should not be restricted as to time.

He said the silent members of this house were entitled to some consideration. They were weary of this discussion. They felt that they understood the question. They were willing to hear the Declaration and Testimony brethren if they wish to speak, and after they had been heard he thought they would be prepared to vote. They had yet a great deal of business to transact. He thought also some regard should be paid to the people of St. Louis. He thought it would be an imposition on the people of St. Louis to extend their session beyond this week.

The motion of Dr. Hand was agreed to.

Dr. Boardman resumed the floor after alluding to a point made by Dr. West and to the political feeling allowed to show itself here remarked.

I am vindicating the right of every man to a fair trial, whether guilty or not. Sir, you may close your own jury not. Sir, you may go out and stand on the steps of this church and you shall take the first twelve men that come along, and if you don't take them, you may take the next twelve, or you may wait for twenty-four hours to choose your men from those passing in that time, and you may put to them the question whether any deliberative assembly, under the circumstances of the case, has the right, as the circumstances presented themselves here, to put these men out of the house without a hearing or a word of explanation. My brother has used the word disloyalty. Well, the word disloyalty is a mighty convenient way of disposing of argument. This method has been tried very largely during the last four or five years, and very many men have suffered just in that way. Because they were disloyal? No, sir; but because their loyalty was not of the type of some other man's loyalty. Because they chose to be loyal to the Constitution and the laws of the country. Because they did not wish to put a collar on their necks and accept their opinions from any human being. An insinuation has been thrown out by way of implication. If I understand myself to be arraigned by that brother, who is one of magnanimity, I beg to say to him, sir, that he has mistaken his object, and that in the presence of Him who searches the heart and tries the reins of all men, I will neither defer to him nor any man in this Assembly nor out of this Assembly in my love of our glorious Constitution, and I tell that brother that he must not throw out his poisoned arrows in that way.

Dr. Thomas, in his argument, you will remember, in that eloquent passage said that this was an age of insubordination. It is. It grows up in the nursery and pervades the whole series of educational institutions in the land, until it crops out in all the avocations of life. It comes up still higher than that until it reaches a point where it assumes the form and type of disloyalty to constitution and laws. I stand by the Constitution of the country and by the Constitution of the Church. This matter has assumed a factitious importance. It comes to us under bias, and the proportions in which it stands out before this Assembly, overshadowing all our proceedings, and more or less pervading our judgment, has assumed an importance greater than necessary. I would not disparage these issues. These brethren as it appears to me have not been fairly and justly dealt with. I had never read that Declaration and Testimony until within the last two or three days, but when I did read it I felt that I had no right to sit here as a Judge upon these men without reading what they had written, and what had brought them before this Court of Christ. The conclusion to which I have come after a careful reading of this paper is, that there are not five men in this Assembly who will not agree to a very large part of what is contained in that pamphlet. I say, sir, I do not believe that there are more than five men in this Assembly who do not believe a very large part of what is there written. The error of these men is what? Do they stand before you as heretics? Is there any charge against them that they have denied the divinity of our Lord and Savior, or justification by faith, or any other thing that enters into the Calvinistic system? Not a word of it. Is there any charge that they have been unfaithful in their work? They stand before us untrammelled, and as perfectly unimpeachable as any other man in this Assembly. What is their offense? Their offense is that they asserted principles we all recognize, affirm and preach. They have set forth views of the distinction between the secular and spiritual powers, between jurisdiction of Church and State. Some of these views are undoubtedly too highly colored, but is that capital offense, that is an unpardonable sin? However wrong they may be, I believe they are all honest men. If they have carried that principle to an extreme, is it an offense so gross that they shall not be allowed time for reflection and for reconsideration? Must it needs be that the authority of the Court is to be brought down upon them with all its unmitigated severity for this first offense?

That paper was never adopted until last September. It was never before the Synod of Kentucky until October. It has never been before the General Assembly until now; and is it the manner of the General Assembly of our Church to pass upon such vast interests as are here involved, and upon the ecclesiastical status and reputation of ministers of the Gospel with this fatal haste? Are you not willing to extend to these men the clemency that you extend to other men?

Is it an unheard of thing for men to change their minds? Does it not belong to all the history of the Church that in times of great public excitement and conflicts men do go to extremes? You remember Luther and the Thesis nailed to the doorway at the church at Wittenburg, and you remember the course of that great reformer and the principal things which marked his illustrious path as a reformer from his beginning to the close. And, sir, do you recollect the conflict of the Church of Scotland? You remember the deliverance of the General Assembly in 1837 and 1838?

Dr. Boardman here alluded to the matter of difference, as related to the New and Old School Churches, after which he cited the case of the Presbytery of Chillicothe in the Synod of Ohio.

The case of the Presbytery of Chillicothe went up by appeal and was decided against them, and they resolved that, notwithstanding the deliverance of the Assembly, the matter in hand pertains to the Church, and it stood precisely as it had done before the Assembly moved its deliverance. If that was not rebellious there was a mighty sympathy toward rebellion in it. Yet what did the Assembly do? Did they say that the Synod of Ohio should go out of the house at the next Assembly until their case was decided? No, sir, they did no such thing; they felt and believed that on due reflection the Synod would become convinced of their error, and would retract their steps. That is the way to deal with men. If they are to be visited with summary and effectual punishment, if the utmost penalty of the law is to be visited upon them, let them have a trial. Suppose for example they were to plant the banner of rebellion in your face? Why, sir, it can never be tolerated. There is no man in this house who would say sooner than I would that the sentiment of the law shall be visited upon every one of them. But, brethren, let us not do it until we have given them time for reflection. Let them go home and consider these wrongs and see whether they will not come up another year and say, brethren, we have erred—we have changed our minds, and we think we have went too far. I do not know and I do not care to know who wrote this pamphlet, but I will venture to say it was written by some man who had pondered these questions until he had become deeply excited. He had been looking at these principles from one single point of view until he was no longer fitted to take the whole sweep of the subject, and until he was no longer in a condition to appreciate the force of the language used. These papers are usually gotten up in committees and sometimes by other members of the committee who possess the pen of a ready writer, and although the language is not what some of the members would have it, yet it contains the substance and is adopted. It will not therefore do to inflict too speedy or rigorous justice upon these men without a trial. Men frequently change their opinions. A very liberal article was written in the Danville Review, of December, 1861, from which an extract was read.

The Danville Review has changed over and over again. [A passage from the Review of Dec. 1862, was then read in relation to the inconsistency of President Lincoln's proclamations.] Must a man to be admitted to the church say that his views on the subject of slavery are in accordance with the deliverances of the Assembly for the last four years. Again, the question might be put to the session whether they stood by the deliverances of the Assembly for the last fifteen years. These men are here—they have had no trial. I would like to see the records in their case if a trial has been had in the lower courts. I would like to see whether the forms of the book have been complied with. I would like to see the citations of the witnesses.

You cannot lay hold of a case unless it comes up in a proper manner by regular appeal to the Synod and the General Assembly. These men have a right to be tried by the Presbytery, and it is the prerogative of the Presbytery. You have no right to put these men in peril of their ecclesiastical life except they are brought before you by due process. We do not mean that any man, be his iniquity never so great, or his crime never so black, shall be put out of the church, except according to the recognized laws of Christ's house. That is the ground we stand on, and I tell you that you have not adhered to these forms, and that is what has hampered the proceedings of the Assembly. A resolution was introduced that these men should be permitted to occupy seats until their cases were decided, but that resolution was laid upon the table. Then what was done? A committee was appointed. And what did they report? Why, their report is a curiosity; it consists of two parts: it consists of an indictment and an execution. Did the committee report charges against these men and direct that these charges should be taken with their Presbyteries and sent down to their Presbyteries that they might be legally tried? No, sir; they simply brought in, in the same paper, an indictment and a sentence. In all events of judiciary, whether civil or ecclesiastical, there is commonly somewhere between the indictment and the sentence a trial, or something that is called a trial; but here there is nothing but an indictment and a sentence. Is this the spirit of justice when it is proposed to mete out to these men? I tell you that the sentence will be very apt to recoil upon the heads of those who inflict it. It is like justice which was administered two hundred years ago; that which I never expected to see in the General Assembly. Such a proceeding as this would then have been called Indian justice. Do you suppose you are going to reach these men by such a sentence as this? Why it will be as ineffectual as the Pope's bull. You must give these men a trial by the forms of our ecclesiastical Court to show that they have not been informally dealt with. This being in the commencement of Dr. West's speech, he alluded to the comparison of a whispering gallery. I take up the

comparison in a different way. You have put it into the power of these men to whisper to the whole church to all the people of this land. You have done for them what they have failed to do for themselves. Sir, if you had gone to these brethren and said, "Here is the army, go in and arm yourselves; the armory is filled with weapons, just go and equip yourselves, take the instruments you choose—they could have chosen no better ones adapted to create sympathy than the instruments you have put into their hands. You have put them in a position in which they were not before. You have put them in sympathy with all who are in favor of universal justice, the principles with which God has endowed human nature. They will now reach tens of thousands of people that they never would have reached with their Declaration and Testimony, and who have no sympathy for their extreme views, but nevertheless whose bosoms will thrill with this course of procedure. Therefore, for the sake of the church, I beg you, fathers and brethren, to pause where you are. I tell you you cannot afford to go on with this kind of regime, for the church is not in a condition